

CLAIMS:

1. A microtube comprising:
a container having an open end defining an opening for receiving materials to be contained, and a closed end;
a lid adapted to make closing contact with the opening of the container;
wherein the lid is provided with a flange extending outwardly therefrom, and arranged to move towards the closed end of the container upon application of a mechanical force to a surface of the flange so as to remove the closing contact, whereby the container is opened.
2. A microtube as claimed in claim 1 which is a test tube or microcentrifuge (microfuge) tube suitable for holding relatively small volumes of material.
3. A microtube as claimed in claim 2 wherein the relatively small volume of material is a volume up to 4ml.
4. A microtube as claimed in claim 2 or claim 3 which is a microfuge tube.
5. A microtube as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein the lid is adapted to make a sealing contact with the opening of the container.
6. A microtube as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5 wherein the lid is connected to the container by a connecting means.
7. A microtube as claimed in claim 6 wherein the connection means provides for relative movement between the lid/flange and the container.

8. A microtube as claimed in claim 7 wherein the connection means is a hinge, flexible connecting strip, rivet or adhesive.
9. A microtube as claimed in claim 8 wherein the connecting means comprises a hinge which may be fixed to the upper perimeter wall of the container defining the opening, and to the lower surface of the lid, and about which the lid/flange and container can move.
10. A microtube as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 9 wherein the lid is adapted such that the flange extends outwardly from a position adjacent to or in axial alignment with the connection means.
11. A microtube as claimed in claim 10 wherein the flange extends upwardly.
12. A microtube as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 11 which is constructed of a plastics material.
13. A microtube as claimed in claim 12 wherein the plastics material is laboratory grade injection moulded plastic.
14. A microtube as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 13 wherein the lid and flange parts of the tube are made as an integral part of the container.
15. A microtube as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 14 wherein the flange is used as a handle.

16. A microtube comprising:
a container having an open end defining an opening for receiving materials to be contained, and a closed end;
a lid connected to the container by a hinge and adapted to make closing contact with the opening of the container;
a flange extending outwardly from the lid, wherein the hinge is connected to the lid at a position between the lid and the flange such that upon application of a mechanical force to the surface of the flange, the lid and flange are arranged to pivot about the hinge so as to remove the closing contact between the lid and the container whereby the container is opened.
17. A storage system/vessel comprising one or more microtubes as defined in any one of claims 1 to 16.
18. A storage system as claimed in claim 17 wherein the storage system/vessel is a rack, a reaction vessel or a centrifuge.
19. The use of a microtube as defined in any one of claims 1 to 16 for the storage of material, as reaction vessels or in centrifugation.